



# State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

## **State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Country Inn & Suites August 11, 2009**

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under "conferences & meetings" at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Teri Effle, Alvin Fox, Sue Gieschen, Gayle Hahn, Jason Kerkman, Les Kimmons, Tim Kolb, Frank Lloyd, Leslie Novacek, Vicki Obrecht, Debra Osentowski, Kipp Ransom, Angela Smith, Terry Wilson

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mitch Arnold, Katie Durfee, Larry Niemeyer, Vicki Rasmussen, Pearl VanZandt

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Don Crouch, Jack Shepard, Kristi Berst, Jim Coyle

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Susan Rocker, TACE; Kasey Moyer, HOPE Program

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:00 a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members participated in a tour of the new Lincoln VR and ATP offices. Discussion was held about the new office features. The front office access is locked and consumers can only enter the back offices by escort of a staff person. The reception desk is behind a half wall with a glass partition. The controlled access was intended to keep people who do not have business in the office from wandering around the office space. It was suggested that staff be asked again how they feel about the locks and ask consumers about their opinion.

No public comment was given.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Kipp Ransom moved and Alvin Fox seconded a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **APPROVAL OF JUNE 9, 2009 MINUTES**

Tim Kolb moved and Sue Gieschen seconded a motion to approve the June 9, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK OF VR**

No feedback was given.

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS**

Les Kimmons asked about the VR Statistics that showed 69 fewer successful outcomes than this time last year. Frank Lloyd indicated he would respond during the Director's Report.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Frank Lloyd reported that the Standards and Indicators are at expected levels and will likely be met. Production will be lower this year (the year ends at the end of September). This is a common occurrence in other states as well this year and is not unexpected with the current economy. Some teams have already met their goals and others will not be able to meet theirs.
- The turnout was good for the Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards. Frank felt this is a very positive activity for the Council to support.
- A report is expected in October from the Government Accounting Office analyzing how VR funds should be divided between states. Currently, the funds are distributed based on the general population of the state plus a base amount that was determined in 1978. Some states have had great population changes since 1978. Other options for distributing the funds that are being researched are 1) Based on the disability population in the state, 2) Based on the purchasing power of the state agency, or 3) Based on the resources available in the state. Several formulas will be analyzed to distribute the money in a more equitable way.
- Reauthorization is not likely to occur until after Jan, 2010.
- Nebraska will apply for additional funds from money that is returned by other states that could not meet their match and returned a portion of their federal funds.
- Les Kimmons and Gayle Hahn were presented with plaques of service recognition as their Council terms have expired.
- Starting Oct. 1, 2009, only three surveys will be offered to consumers; Employment Discussion, Job Search Strategy and Plan Completion. Electronic and paper versions will still be available. Questions are being developed to be added to the questionnaire that Easter Seals does for consumers that have had a successful close.

## **STIMULUS MONEY IDEAS/PROJECTS**

Mark Schultz spoke about the economic stimulus funds. Requests For Proposals (RFPs) were sent out to agencies across the state. Mark distributed a written report of the RFPs that are being recommended to the State Board of Education. The projects will: expand a model from the Grand Island area that provides services to individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); expand employment services for individuals with TBI; provide forklift operator training in the Omaha area; provide a transportation van between the Indian Reservation and area community jobs; implement Project SEARCH which provides

job coaching for hospital jobs; and provide supported employment services for individuals with autism. Monitoring of all of these projects will be done.

VR will be establishing projects with ARRA funds to expand mental health agreements to increase outcomes, weatherization job training, job coaching, nursing job training, and welding class training.

Enhancement of VR capacity will be done by succession planning, information technology initiatives, communication technology, and assistive technology equipment loans.

#### **HOPE PROGRAM UPDATE**

Kasey Moyer spoke about the HOPE program – Higher Opportunity through the Power of Employment. They operate a consumer-driven employment program for consumers with behavioral health issues as part of Region V Systems by using evidence-based practices. Caseloads of less than 25 are maintained with 243 referrals over two years and two full-time employment specialists. Over the two years, 27% have gained employment. The program was able to add one full-time benefits specialist this year. Consumers have found employment at a wide variety of businesses. Kasey defined program strengths as smaller case loads, pre-employment services, job searching assistance, job coaching services and follow up. New this year is a social networking, peer group. Hospital Diversion House will be a respite home for individuals age 19 and over who are having mental health issues but have not gone into crisis. They can leave the house for work versus a hospital setting where they would be required to stay. Four people can stay at the house at one time for a maximum of five days. Winston spoke about his experience with job assistance and is working at Goodwill. He left his treatment program because they were not flexible in working around his job. The waiting list for the HOPE program is about six weeks.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Don Crouch announced that officers needed to be elected for the next year.

Chair: Gayle Hahn nominated Kipp Ransom for chair.

Vice Chair: Kipp Ransom nominated Sue Gieschen for Vice Chair.

Executive Committee: Sue Gieschen nominated Jason Kerkman to serve on the Executive Committee.

Angela Smith and Deb Osentowski were willing to continue on the Executive Committee.

Les Kimmons moved that all of the above be named to these positions. Tim Kolb seconded the motion.

There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Susan Rocker does training for supported employment programs. Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) is operated out of the University of Missouri and Susan has been hired as a trainer for Nebraska and Iowa. TACE is designed to support and enhance employment outcomes from VR offices in each state. The Nebraska VR office will meet with Susan on August 20, to review Nebraska's State Plan and coordinate training from Susan with the needs of the office.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### Client Services Committee

- Kipp Ransom reported for the Client Services Committee. The Committee is recommending that when hard copy surveys are handed out, consumers be encouraged to fill out the survey prior to leaving the office. The return rate has been very low on the paper copy surveys.
- The Committee is proposing the formation of a focus group of VR consumers to meet in October. The group would be asked to share what they like about VR services and what could be improved upon.

### Employer Services Committee

- Jason Kerkman announced that the Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards were presented on July 15 with 30-40 people in attendance. All four recipients seemed to be very honored. Coverage was done by many newspapers and television channels.
- The Senator Luncheon will be held in February.
- In October, Employer Awards will be presented for Disability Employment Awareness Month. Nominations are being collected. At least one member of the SRC will need to be present at each presentation done across the state.
- Project SEARCH is involving hospitals in hiring people with disabilities. Kearney, GI, Norfolk and Lincoln are participating. Trainings have been done by Project SEARCH staff.

### Transition Services Committee

- Angela Smith reported for the Transition Services Committee. The Transition Round Table was held on June 18.
- The Youth Council presented at the UNL summer institute.
- An Omaha staff person is becoming the 'autism expert' for job placement.
- The first draft of the Transition IEP book was distributed. Recommendations have been made to change the pictures to be more job oriented and less sports oriented and to include disabled youth in the pictures.
- A YRTC liaison will be hired to help kids transition back to home and school. The Geneva Youth Center will provide work experiences while the youth are there.
- Transition blogs will be added to the VR web site.
- The Transition Summit will be held in Kearney on November 12.

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.